

Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site



2005 Annual Report

Letter from the Superintendent:

Preparing this annual report gave us an opportunity to pause and to reflect on all that was accomplished in 2005. It was certainly an exciting and productive year. Read inside about a commemorative pageant, new acquisitions to the museum collections, and both temporary and traveling exhibits.

Preservation work abounds at the park. The Little Studio project reported last year is now complete. Major projects are now underway at Aspet and the Blow-Me-Down Stone Arch Bridge. Funding has also been secured to begin replacing portions of the two-thirds of a mile of historic hedges – a feature of the landscape many consider an art form itself.

The results of a 2004 comprehensive visitor survey were received last year (visit the park's website for links to download the full or summary report). The survey indicates a number of interesting details, such as our visitors tend to be slightly older and more highly educated than those visiting other national parks. The survey also reports a high degree of satisfaction (98%) with the quality of visitor services at the park. This high rate is only possible due to the ongoing support of our Volunteers, Friends, and the Trustees of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial. Learn about one of our new volunteers, Francois Hyde, in our "Volunteer Spotlight" on page four.

Please visit our website www.nps.gov/saga for more up-to-date information about news and events, schedules for concerts, exhibits, sculpting workshops, and other special programs. And please, feel free to call or write me at any time with ideas or suggestions.

BJ Dunn, *Superintendent*

A unit of the National Park Service, the site features the home, gardens, and studios of Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907), one of America's greatest sculptors. The park is open daily from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., from Memorial Day Weekend until October 31. Admission is \$5 per person for those 16 and older and an annual park pass is available for purchase for \$25 (good for cardholder and guests arriving in one non-commercial vehicle).

Nine Contemporary Sculptors: Fellows of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial

Exhibition at the UBS Gallery, New York City



(L to R) Trustee Kent L. Barwick; NPS Regional Director Mary Bomar; Channing Powell (Powell's daughter); Medal recipient Earl A. Powell III; Trustee Charles A. Platt; and park Superintendent BJ Dunn

Between September 22 and December 2, 2005 the UBS Gallery in New York City was the host for an exhibition of nine former Fellows – organized and curated by the Saint-Gaudens Memorial. The artists, Petah Coyne, Tara Donovan, Walter Dusenbury, Alex McFarlane, Judy Pfaff, Alison Saar, Peter Shelton, Do-Ho Suh, and Andrew Topolski are former recipients of the Saint-Gaudens Fellowship. The Fellowship, offered by the Saint-Gaudens Memorial since 1979, is awarded to artists who demonstrate exceptional talent and who are likely to benefit from this recognition.

Preceding the opening reception for the exhibition on September 29, the Augustus Saint-Gaudens Medal was awarded by the Saint-Gaudens Memorial to Earl A. Powell III, Director of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. At the award ceremony, the author and art critic Robert Hughes spoke about Augustus Saint-Gaudens. This was the eighth presentation of the Medal, created in 1991 by Robert W. White, grandson of Stanford White, and a well-known artist and former Trustee of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial. The Medal was presented by Trustee Kent L. Barwick, President of the Municipal Art Society.

Commemorating America's First Pageant

A major highlight of 2005 occurred in June, when the park staged a special outdoor pageant, "Masque of the Golden Bowl." The event celebrated the 100th anniversary of a pageant to honor Saint-Gaudens and was held at its original location at the "Temple." In June 1905, over eighty members of the "Cornish Colony" created a special play to honor Augustus Saint-Gaudens' twentieth anniversary in Cornish. His arrival in Cornish marked the beginning of the Colony, an extraordinary grouping of artists, writers, architects, landscape designers and art patrons, who lived and worked here from 1885 to 1935. The original pageant, "A Masque of 'Ours,' or the Gods and the Golden Bowl," was written by Louis Evan Shipman with a prologue by Percy Mackaye, both members of the Colony. The play is credited with sparking a national interest in pageants of this type. The Masque had a classical theme, featuring Greek gods and goddesses with wonderful costumes and props, including a full size chariot. Participants included well-known artists and featured original music performed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Written by local author, Clyde Watson, the new play was performed by a cast of 60 local volunteer actors. The contemporary audience experienced a sense of the life and entertainment of the Gilded Age artists who frequented the Cornish area during the turn of the Twentieth Century. The event was co-produced by the Trustees of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial and generously underwritten by keynote sponsors and local businesses. Along with the performance, an exhibit of original objects associated with the 1905 Masque, including artwork, costumes, props and archival photographs, was featured in the park's Picture Gallery. An exact replica of the original chariot was constructed for the play by the site's preservation carpenter, Ross Houghton, and then painted like the original by children from the Cornish Elementary School. An illustrated exhibit catalog was prepared by park curator, Dr. Henry Duffy, and distributed to visitors. Three performances were attended by over 1,700 people.

Clockwise from upper right-hand corner: Frances Slade as Neptune, Frances Grimes as Iris, Percy MacKaye as Mercury (1905 Pageant, SGNHS Archives), Jim Atkinson and Gretchen Holm as Mr. and Mrs. Saint-Gaudens, Nicholas Wood as Mercury, Ayers Hemphill as Iris, Bineke Oort as Neptune (from the 2005 Pageant).



Park Obtains Funds for Fire Department

The park applied for and received two grants on behalf of the Cornish, NH Volunteer Fire Department through the NPS Rural Fire Assistance Program. The first grant, received in March, 2005 provided the Department with \$1,700 worth of wildland firefighting equipment including six backpack pumps, 1,000 feet of fire hose, and a mop-up kit. A second grant for \$3,500 was received in September, 2005, which enabled the Department to purchase seven new pagers. Cornish Fire Chief Nate Cass was extremely grateful and said "these grants enabled us to purchase needed equipment for which we did not have funds." The program was created in 2000 to increase firefighter safety and enhance the fire protection capabilities of rural fire departments.

2005 at a Glance

\$988,000 base operating budget

\$701,510 in NPS projects

28,150 visitors

Seven concerts attended by 1,577 people

Three pageant performances
attended by 1,700 people

7,500 volunteer hours donated to the park

Emergency Repairs to Stone Arch Bridge

The National Park Service has provided funds that will allow the park to make needed repairs to the Stone Arch Bridge, one of the site's important historic structures. Built in 1887, much of the original bridge was covered in the 1950s when Route 12A was realigned. Now, due to soil and weather conditions, a considerable section of the bridge wall shows signs of severe distress. As an emergency measure, bracing was installed in the fall to prevent collapse of the bridge wall over the winter. In the meantime, plans and specifications will be completed and a contractor will be selected to rebuild the stone parapet wall and a large portion of the adjacent retaining wall. Additionally, there will be repairs to the brickwork on the underside of the stone arch. These actions will restore the north side of the bridge to its original appearance and stabilize the structure. The project is expected to be completed in 2006.



Stone Arch Bridge, circa 1920, from a hand-tinted photo by Wallace Nutting

Aspet Fire Protection Project

In October 2005, Aspet was closed to the public in order to begin preparations for a major project that includes installation of a “mist” fire suppression system, upgraded fire detection, dehumidification in the basement, as well as upgraded electrical and heating systems.



Aspet collection being prepared for fire protection project

A mist sprinkler system was selected for its ability to suppress a fire with much less water than a conventional sprinkler, thus preventing the possibility of extensive water damage to the museum collections and the house. Due to the historic significance of the structure, the work must be done with great care in order to protect the original fabric of the building, as well as to ensure that the components are as unobtrusive as possible. The project will take place throughout much of the winter, spring, and summer of 2006. The historic furnishings are being carefully packed and stored, and the fragile wall coverings protected. Aspet will remain closed to the public throughout the 2006 visitor season while work is underway. The contract for the project was awarded to Lumus Construction of Woburn, MA.

Little Studio Preservation

In 2005, a major preservation project was continued from the previous fall at the Little Studio. Restoration of the pergola included repair and replacement of deteriorated beams, grape arbor, wooden gutters, support posts, and fluted columns. Failing stucco on the pergola and building exterior was also repaired, as was part of the building's roof. Preservation work was also completed on the great north skylight. To prevent leakage during rainstorms, each glass panel was removed, the joints cleaned and re-caulked and structural damage repaired. The original glass was then reinstalled or replaced as needed. Work on the project was completed by Lumus Construction of Woburn, MA.





Volunteer Spotlight – Francois Hyde

Francois Hyde of South Londonderry, Vermont, was a new volunteer in 2005. Francois began assisting at the park during the Sunday concerts by providing information to visitors. He soon went on to giving tours of Aspet. For Francois, being at the site had a very personal connection. His grandmother, Mary Lawrence, was one of Augustus Saint-Gaudens' best sculptural assistants. She later married another sculptor, Francois Tonetti, Francois' grandfather. Francois also personally knew the artists, Barry Faulkner and Paul Manship, both members of the Cornish Art Colony.

With such artistic forbearers, Francois was naturally interested in the subject, and already quite knowledgeable about art, sculpture and the history of the Cornish Colony. During the summer, Francois began reading even more and studying about Saint-Gaudens' life, as well as the history of Aspet and its furnishings. Francois' warm and friendly manner and his obvious interest in the site, created a great impression with park visitors.

Francois is now retired from a career in shipping, having worked in New York, the Middle East and Africa. Besides helping out at Saint-Gaudens, he also offers his time volunteering to drive dialysis patients twice a week from Vermont to the dialysis clinic in Keene, NH. While waiting to drive the patients home, Francois often spends his time at the library researching other artists of the Dublin and Cornish, New Hampshire colonies.

Partnership Spotlight – Student Conservation Association

The park has a long-standing and extremely successful partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA), whose national headquarters are located in nearby Charlestown, NH. In 2005, a total of thirteen SCA interns provided a variety of valuable assistance to the park:

- Six-month SCA intern, Kris Steiber, of Prairie du Chien, WI, continued park efforts to manage non-native, invasive plants
- An SCA trail crew comprised of six high school students and two adult leaders spent a month rehabilitating the park's Blow-Me-Down Trail
- Two 12-week interns, Deidre Linn of Canaan, NH and Kelly Maloney of Springfield, MO, each worked for the park's Division of Interpretation providing tours and visitor services
- Two MBA students, Kari Feinberg University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Roger Lee, University of California, Davis, spent 12 weeks updating the park's Business Plan.



SCA intern Kris Steiber

Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) Program

During the 2005 visitor season the park had a committed corps of volunteers assisting in all program areas. The volunteer flower arrangers, now in their second year, provided beautiful arrangements that delighted visitors throughout the summer and fall. Other volunteers helped to keep the trails in good condition and assisted in removing invasive, exotic vegetation. Volunteers also helped to staff the Eastern National bookstore and provide tours of Aspet. The work done by all of these volunteers was essential in helping the park achieve a high rate of visitor satisfaction.



2005 park staff, partners and volunteers

New in Museum Collections

Several important additions were made to the park's museum collection in 2005. Two sculptures were donated by the Trustees of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial: the *Charles E. Butler* bronze relief by Louis St. Gaudens, brother of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and *Bust of Paul St. Gaudens* by Annetta St. Gaudens, Augustus' sister-in-law.

The archival collection was enhanced by two important additions. The gift of the original script for the 1905 "The Masque of 'Ours,' or The Gods and the Golden Bowl" by Louis Evan Shipman was presented by the author's grandson Nicholas Angell and a letter from Augustus Saint-Gaudens to the painter Francis Davis Millet was donated by the painter's grandson Frank D. Millet. Both are significant acquisitions and contribute to the understanding of the sculptor and the Cornish Colony.

Other 2005 acquisitions include a group of historic photographs of Aspet and Cornish from Priscilla Bridgman, and a top hat owned by William Beaman, given by Peter Nyboer.

Traveling Exhibition Concludes U.S. Tour

After a three-year tour the exhibition *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: American Sculptor of the Gilded Age* concluded at the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica, New York in November. Traveling to 12 museum venues, the tour highlighted 70 of the sculptor's major works.

The exhibition was enthusiastically received and generated positive reviews and press. The largest crowds were recorded at the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester, NY, with a little over 15,000 people viewing the exhibits during the 3 month venue. It is estimated that over 100,000 people saw the exhibition during its nationwide tour. The accompanying catalog written by Dr. Henry J. Duffy, curator, and former park superintendent, John H. Dryfhout, sold out.

Upcoming in 2006

The park and the Trust for Museum Exhibitions are excited to announce that the traveling exhibition (see above) will continue to the Museo Vela, in Ligornetto, Switzerland for a summer 2006 show.

Scriptwriting and production are also underway for a new hour-long documentary *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master of American Sculpture* to be premiered in 2007 – the centennial of the sculptor's death. The film, produced by the Saint-Gaudens Memorial, is to debut first locally and then at major cities around the country, and will also be aired on public television. For film fundraising information, please contact the Memorial (see page 6).



Park Hosts New Hampshire Governor and Executive Council, Vermont Governor, and State Officials to Promote Scenic Byway

On August 3, 2005, the park hosted a meeting of New Hampshire Governor John Lynch and the Executive Council. Following the meeting at the Little Studio, the group was joined by the Vermont Governor Jim Douglas, along with tourism officials from both states for a tour of several local Byway attractions including the Cornish-Windsor Covered Bridge, the Claremont Visitor Center, historic Fort at Number 4 in Charlestown, the Bellows Falls, Waypoint Interpretive Center, Hoyt's Landing in Springfield, VT, and Windsor's historic downtown including the American Precision Museum.

The park worked with the Connecticut River Joint Commissions and Connecticut River Byway Council to arrange this venture in an effort to focus officials from both states on the significant natural, scenic, and historic resources of the Connecticut River Valley.

The tour coincided with an application by the Byway Council seeking National Scenic Byway status for the Connecticut River Byway, which runs from Brattleboro, VT to Pittsburg, NH. On September 22, 2005, the Connecticut River Byway received its national designation, joining the White Mountain Trail and Kancamagus Scenic Byway in New Hampshire and becoming the first national byway in Vermont.

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Established in 1992, the program works to recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the country. Saint-Gaudens NHS has worked closely with the Connecticut River Joint Commissions and the Byway Council for a number of years and Steve Walasewicz, the site's Natural Resource Manager, serves on both of these boards.

Trustees of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial

The Saint-Gaudens Memorial is a private, non-profit corporation chartered by the State of New Hampshire in 1919, to preserve and exhibit Saint-Gaudens' home and studios. The trustees operated the site as a museum from 1926 until 1965, when they donated the property to the National Park Service. The Memorial continues to play an important role as a park partner and supports the site in a variety of ways including sponsoring programs and activities that promote public awareness of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, his work and sculpture in general.

Each year the Saint-Gaudens Memorial sponsors a summer concert series at the site, an annual event since 1946, as well as three art exhibitions in the Picture Gallery, a tradition since 1948. The Memorial also contributes toward the ongoing conservation treatment of museum objects, acquires new objects for the park's museum collection, and sponsors educational programs.



Friends of Saint-Gaudens

Organized in 2001, the Friends of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial assist the Trustees and the park in a number of ways including serving as an advocate for improving park facilities, helping the Trustees and the site locate works of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, adopting projects, and sponsoring special workshops and programs.

Benefits of membership include a biannual newsletter featuring articles of interest about the park, Saint-Gaudens life and work, and related topics, as well as an annual pass to the park.

For more information about the Trustees of the Saint-Gaudens Memorial or for joining the Friends of the Saint-Gaudens and to help them in their support of the park please contact:

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